

Message Text

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22-12

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 762

INFO AMCONGEN HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 0050

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, CH

SUBJ: ENCOUNTER WITH NEW PRC AMBASSADOR

1. DURING NEW YEAR'S FESTIVITIES AT MALACANANG PALACE, MRS. MARCOS RESHUFFLED TABLE SEATING ARRANGEMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN MADE BY PROTOCOL AND DRAGOONED NEWLY ARRIVED CHINESE AMBASSADOR KE HUA AND ME TO HER TABLE. BY CONSPICUOUSLY SEATING HIM ON HER RIGHT AND ME ON HER LEFT, SHE CONTRIVED BOTH GESTURE OF SIGNAL HONOR TO CHINESE AND SYMBOLIC THEATRICAL ENACTMENT OF HER FAVORITE ROLE AS "BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING" BETWEEN U.S. AND CHINA. MORE TRADITIONAL GUEST OF HONOR SEAT AT PRESIDENT'S RIGHT AT HIS TABLE WAS OCCUPIED BY GINA LOLLOBRIGIDA).

2. DURING THOSE FEW MOMENTS WHEN I COULD TALK WITH AMBASSADOR KE HUA IN ZANY ATMOSPHERE OF MALACANANAG NEW YEAR, I FOUND HIM COURTEOUS, AFFABLE, RELATIVELY AT EASE IN ENGLISH, AND QUITE URBANE. HE HAS GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR, BUT SEEMED RATHER BAFFLED BY EVENING'S ACTIVITIES. REST OF GUESTS AT TABLE WERE ITALIAN "PRINCESS," FRENCH COUNTS, AND OTHERS OF IMELDA'S JET SET.

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3. SHORTLY AFTER MIDNIGHT, MARCOS DAUGHTER IMEE GRABBED

MY HAND AND LED ME OFF IN A SNAKE DANCE AROUND THE PALACE
PRECINCTS. THIS FORMATION WAS SOON JOINED BY MOST OTHER
GUESTS AND LASTED AN EXHAUSTING FIFTEEN MINUTES. WHEN WE
RETURNED, MY CHINESE COLLEAGUE WAS STILL SITTING
UNPERTURBED AT HIS PLACE OF HONOR, BUT OUR CONVERSATION
WAS LIMITED TO HANDSHAKES AND MUTUAL GOOD WISHES FOR THE
NEW YEAR.

4. IT WAS MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH KE HUA. ON FUTURE
OCCASIONS, I MAY HAVE BETTER OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE
SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION IN LESS BIZARRE CIRCUMSTANCES.
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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